



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING


GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 27, 2022

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors
Community-based Organization Directors and Administrators

FROM: Michael F. Rice, Ph.D., State Superintendent 

SUBJECT: Media Partnerships for Recruitment in the Great Start Readiness Program

In December, Governor Gretchen Whitmer issued a [press release](#) celebrating the bipartisan expansion of the [Great Start Readiness Program](#) (GSRP), Michigan's nationally recognized preschool program for four-year-olds, and the accomplishment of enrolling over 35,000 children already this program year.

However, spaces still remain to start GSRP this 2022 winter and spring, and I encourage you to continue to reach out and encourage families to apply for GSRP entry. A portion of a year of preschool is preferable to no preschool at all.

Understanding the challenges of recruitment and enrollment during the pandemic, with the help of the local and intermediate school districts' e-early childhood staff and other community-based providers of GSRP, the Michigan Department of Education's GSRP team has developed a [GSRP Recruitment Toolkit](#) to assist local communities with recruitment efforts, along with the support from The Yaffe Group.

The toolkit focuses on promoting 1) the importance of quality preschool; 2) the safety of GSRP programs; 3) the quality of GSRP programs; and 4) direction on where to locate, learn about, and enroll in preschool programs. This is a **free** resource for you to utilize to assist you in your local GSRP recruitment efforts.

The Yaffe Group will continue to support local recruitment through December 2022 by offering training webinars on the use of the tool kit, new communications materials, and other supports to aid local marketing and recruitment efforts.

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To supplement the efforts already being done locally, The Yaffe Group has developed a complementary strategy to raise awareness of GSRP. Stories are being developed to reach two audiences:

1. Media – through the creation of press releases, the Yaffe Group team will pitch to media outlets on your behalf or in partnership with you. The focus of the press releases is to engage the media in a conversation about GSRP and the opportunity to connect more eligible families with the incredible program.
2. Parents – through the creation of “softer” blog-style messages to brand stories that educate parents about features of the quality and safety of the GSRP program. These brand stories can be used on social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) to reach parents. Several GSRP specific brand stories are available within the toolkit. These stories can also be tailored to your local context in partnership with your local district as a GSRP partner.

If you are interested in this opportunity of engaging with The Yaffe Group to supplement your local recruitment and enrollment efforts for GSRP or to create a more customized campaign for your area, please contact Heather Pence at hpence@yaffe.com or email MDE-GSRP@michigan.gov. Please indicate that you are contacting them in response to the MDE Thursday Communication memo regarding the GSRP media opportunity. The GSRP recruitment toolkit is funded by the federal Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five grant and is available for all preschool program recruiting.

As you know, nothing in the engagement and recruitment strategies above precludes you from implementing your own outreach strategies with the families in your communities, either separately or in concert with the strategies noted above. However you choose to connect with and engage the families in your communities, it is critical that you make clear to families the tremendous value of preschool to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional growth of our children.

Thank you for helping us maximize the number of children who are able to benefit from last summer’s expansion of GSRP preschool. We appreciate your partnership and leadership in helping our students get great starts in their education!

cc: Michigan Education Alliance
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Directors